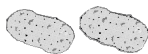




**IT'S A HELL OF A
LOT COLDER THAN
IT LOOKS OUT
THERE. HOW MANY
TIMES HAVE WE
HEARD THAT THIS
WINTER? TOO
DAMN MANY IF
YOU ASK ME.**

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KINGPIN



SERVING SARAH



SWEET HOME ALABAMA

NO SPUD 4U

I just can't win. No sooner do I recover from the freakin' flu than I get a really nasty cold. I don't know what I'm doing wrong. I take big time vitamin dosages. I walk around in this freezing cold. I eat right, more or less. Yet I keep getting whacked with these short term afflictions. I mentioned to The Wife this morning that if we had to go out somewhere today, maybe we should just open all the doors and windows for a few minutes and flood the house with cold fresh air. That idea went over like a lead balloon. But I still think I'm onto something. The Spud Central heating system sucks air from inside the house and recirculates it. If there are bugs floating around, sooner or later they're gonna get into me. Oh well, there's something comforting about having a cold. I get to lay around and moan a lot and The Wife feels sorry for me and offers to make me tea and stuff. That's pretty cool, I guess.

KINGPIN (TWO SPUDS)

*As I have said time and again, there really isn't much in the way of originality on TV. Every once in a while, you'll get an innovation, like **Sienfeld** or **The Sopranos** or (God forgive me), **Survivor**, and then you'll get an endless stream of Xerox copies of same. Well **Kingpin** falls into this category, as a kind of **Sopranos** -- Mexican Style, or at the very least, **Sopranos Wannabe Supreme**. The trouble is that **The Sopranos** is so good that anybody with at least half a brain who chooses to emulate it (or pay homage, as the entertainment lawyers say), is still going to come out ahead of somebody who chooses to emulate say, **Zena: Warrior Princess**. **IN A NUTSHELL:** An ambitious and well educated Mexican drug dealer, (and his sociopathic but fiercely loyal brother), is in the process of taking over the family business from a bunch of relatives who are either out and out assholes or old school Panchos. Either way, a few of them bite the dust in every episode. To make matters worse, our **Chico Soprano** is married to a gringo lawyer who takes an active part in the family business and is, of course, hated by everyone in the family, the women especially. **Kingpin** has the dusty washed out look that **Steven Soderburgh's Traffic** had, although it's hardly as cool and there's nobody in this series with half the screen presence of **Benicio Del Toro**. There are characters from all over the spectrum, from an overzealous DEA agent to a cosmetic surgeon who appears to be somehow on retainer to the drug cartel for emergency facelifts. The show jumps around a lot from Mexico to the US. I guess that's some kind of metaphor for drug traffic. **FEARLESS FORECAST:** Only six episodes of this show have been produced. This week is the finale, which means if it gets picked up, it won't be back till fall. While **Kingpin** does not have the same intimacy and sophistication (it's action driven as opposed to character driven), as **The Sopranos**, it's still pretty interesting to watch, because the vein its mining is quite rich. Unfortunately, this show is produced by **Aaron Spelling** and will eventually turn into another big budget soap opera. And, frankly, with all the relatives getting knocked off every week, I'm not sure there's enough family to last through a whole season.*

SERVING SARAH (ONE SPUD)

I think **Elizabeth Hurley** is one of the world's major Hollywood style babes. But I also happen to think she has terrible taste in the movies she chooses to be in. I was looking through her filmography on the Internet Movie Data Base and realized that she has managed to become extremely famous around the world without actually ever having been in a good film. Go figure. Nevertheless, I felt like something light on the weekend so I rented **Serving Sarah**, in which Liz stars with **Matthew Perry** as the cuckolded wife of some rich Texas asshole. Matthew, who always looks ready for rehab, plays a process server who has to serve Liz her divorce papers. From this set up a couple of hours of nonsense ensues and then movie's over and you go to bed. This is one of those lighthearted comedies that have become Matthew Perry's trademark. He always plays the same sort of character, not quite as stupid as he looks and always getting to smooch it up with beautiful women, like **Liz Hurley** or **Salma Hayak**. This movie is insipid, shallow and essentially full of baloney, but somehow quite pleasant to watch. It's not going to bend your mind in any particular way, but sometimes that's a good thing.

SWEET HOME ALABAMA (NO SPUD 4U)

I'm a big fan of **Reese Witherspoon**. First of all, she's great to look at. She's cute as a bug. Secondly, she's a very good comedienne, which is a rare quality. Thirdly, she seems to get involved in interesting projects, although this is one of her least interesting. In **Sweet Home Alabama**, Reese plays a white trash Alabama girl who makes it big in *The Big Apple*, as a fashion designer, gets engaged to the Mayor's son, then heads home to Alabama to finalize her divorce from her first love, yadda yadda.

What I didn't get about this movie was, well pretty much the whole idea of it. In the setup Reese has the world by the tail. She goes home to confront a man she appears to hate, makes his life a living hell until he signs their divorce papers, slums around her old home town and is reminded, at every turn, just how much she despised growing up there, brings her boyfriend (**Patrick Dempsey**) and his mom (**Candice Bergen**) down there from NYC, where they decide to throw the wedding, then, without any warning, changes her mind, and decides she wants to be with original husband. Now I'm absolutely sure I didn't nod off somewhere in the middle of this movie and miss an important pivotal scene. This really does all happen for no apparent reason and kind of blows what was a not bad showcase for Reese's talent right out the window, where it falls into that murky quicksand where no spud can grow.

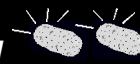
Having said all that, I can't help but wonder, with all the scrutiny a movie has to go through from the time it is shot till the time it is shipped, the dozens of people that have to pass judgement on it, the hundreds in test audiences that get to preview it, etc. etc that a logic flaw as big as Aaron Spelling's house does not get seen and somehow fixed, leads me to believe that people out in Hollywood are just getting Hollywoodier every day.

Achoo. I'm going back to the Couch and watch Tiger Woods kick some PGA butt. Till next time.



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THE ESSENTIAL REESE WITHERSPOON



Admittedly, I haven't seen all the flicks Reese has been in, but she's usually worth checking out.

LEGALLY BLONDE 2:

RED, WHITE & BLONDE (2003)

THE IMPORTANCE OF

BEING EARNEST (2002) (2 SPD)

LEGALLY BLONDE (2001) (2 SPD)

LITTLE NICKY (2000)

AMERICAN PSYCHO (2000) (2 SPD)

BEST LAID PLANS (1999)

ELECTION (1999) (2 SPD)

CRUEL INTENTIONS (1999)

PLEASANTVILLE (1998) (2 SPD)

OVERNIGHT DELIVERY (1998)

TWILIGHT (1998)

FEAR (1996)

FREEWAY (1996)

S.F.W. (1994)

JACK THE BEAR (1993)

A FAR OFF PLACE (1993)

SPUD RATING LEGEND



Absolute Must See



Check It Out /
Was Worth It



Take It
Or Leave It



Just Plain
Sucks